



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Scranton Awards ARPA Grants for Affordable Childcare Programs

Six organizations awarded more than \$725,000 total in federal grants.

IMPORTANT

- **ARPA funding supports critical services for working families.**
- **Childcare grants are some of Scranton's largest individual ARPA awards announced to date.**

SCRANTON, PA. – The City of Scranton awarded more than \$725,000 to six groups to support ongoing and expanded affordable childcare services on Wednesday, May 3, 2023. Organizations applied for the grants that are part of the City's \$68.7 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

"By supporting affordable childcare programs through ARPA, we're aiding both child development and working families," Mayor Paige G. Cagnetti announced at the WellKind School for Early Learners, 515 Fig St., Scranton. "Affordable childcare is also economic development, and we're thrilled to support these new and expanding programs to help these organizations and the families of Scranton."

Through a spending plan approved by City Council in May 2022, the City allocated a total of \$1.5 million to support affordable childcare programs, as well as educational catchup programs. Announcement of the education program grant recipients is pending in the coming weeks.

Applications opened in January and were weighed based upon the City's ARPA mission, which aims to give people access to resources, rebuild infrastructure systems that impact everyday life, and foster equitable wealth generation targeting residents' needs. All applications were reviewed by the City, compliance consultants from Anser Advisory, and Dr. Marie George, a subject matter expert and CEO of the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School.

Grant recipients, the funding they will receive, and their project details, in alphabetical order, are:

- Agency for Community EmPOWERment of NEPA (ACE), 123 Wyoming Avenue, \$100,000 for the second phase of renovations at its Pre-K Center at 312 William Street. Upon completion, which includes new energy efficiency and security measures, the center will educate nearly 160 low-to-moderate income children for free. ACE will also provide wraparound services for families and encourage new community collaborations. The community action agency's mission is to help people prosper.
- Boys & Girls Club of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 609 Ash Street, \$223,275 to support increased capacity and staffing. Through the grant, the Boys & Girls Club hopes to raise attendance to pre-pandemic levels and serve more than 200 children per day as it continues to serve families whose income is below the median average income.
- Discovery Montessori, 1733 North Main Avenue, \$160,000 for increased capacity at their North Scranton campus. Discovery plans to increase capacity from 30 students to more than 100, creating jobs along with it, through the ARPA grant. Discovery's mission includes a commitment to serve families with low-to-moderate incomes.



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- Greater Scranton YMCA, 706 North Blakely St., Dunmore, \$62,500 to increase capacity for in-demand childcare programs. Scranton residents account for approximately 29% of the YMCA's current and wait-listed childcare recipients. Funding will support the planned expansion of second-floor space into up to three new classrooms. Expanded services will also create eight new jobs.
- United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 425 Alder Street, \$130,000, for the purchase of two large passenger vans to continue to provide free transportation for school-age students. Services are provided to and from Dunmore, Riverside, and Scranton schools, providing critical transportation to working families.
- WellKind School for Early Learners, 515 Fig Street, \$50,000 to expand educational opportunities at the South Scranton facility and repair flooring damaged by preventative cleaning methods during the COVID-19 pandemic. WellKind plans to address pandemic-related issues for children, including increased feelings of anxiety and limited access to enrichment activities by providing additional programming to improve emotional and physical wellbeing.

"At WellKind, we believe that development in the areas of intellect, emotions, environmental awareness, relationships, healthy lifestyles, purpose and passion, and gratitude and appreciation all have a valid and necessary place in the field of education," said Elizabeth Keiper, owner and executive director of WellKind. "We are thrilled to offer increased, ongoing weekly enrichment opportunities to our students and families through the funding of this generous grant. We will be heavily focusing on wellness practices by building skill sets which were underdeveloped throughout the pandemic. These therapeutic approaches to wellness will be centered on the arts and hands-on, active movement, and sensory experiences. WellKind is deeply committed to the development of heart-centered individuals who will spark positive change in our community. We are extremely grateful for the City of Scranton's confidence in our initiative and look forward to bringing our vision to life."

"The need for childcare services in our community is great," said Trish Fisher, president and CEO of the Greater Scranton YMCA. "Creating three new classrooms in our facility will allow our YMCA to open an additional 30 childcare spots annually. Additionally, the project will create eight new jobs and will allow parents to work knowing their children are in a safe, nurturing environment during the day. We are so grateful for this grant award and to the City of Scranton for helping to turn our vision into a reality."

Additional information about Scranton's ARPA plan is online at scrantonpa.gov/arpa.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) OF 2021: ARPA is a \$1.9 trillion federal economic stimulus bill. The City of Scranton has been awarded \$68.7 million in ARPA funds to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency and its economic impacts. The mission of Scranton's ARPA program is to give people access to resources, rebuild the infrastructure systems that impact their everyday lives, and foster equitable wealth generation that targets the needs of Scranton residents.